

Amendments to the Specification

Please amend the Specification by substituting the following amended paragraphs:

[0030] Reaction cuvette load station 63 and reaction vessel load station 65 are respectively positioned proximate outer cuvette carousel 14 and inner vessel carousel 16 and are adapted to load reaction cuvettes 24 into cuvette ports 20 sideways as described later and reaction vessels 25 into vessel ports 22 using for example a translatable robotic arm 67. In operation, used cuvettes 24 in which an assay has been finally conducted, are washed and dried in a wash station 71 like disclosed in published U. S. Patent Application No.: 2005/0014274 ~~co-pending application Ser. No. ____/____,____~~ assigned to the assignee of the present invention. Subsequent assays are conducted in cleaned used cuvettes 24 unless dictated otherwise for reasons like disclosed in ~~co-pending application Ser. No. 10/318,804~~ assigned to the assignee of the present invention. Cuvette unload station 59 is adapted to remove unusable reaction cuvettes 24 from cuvette ports 20 again using a translatable robotic arm 67 like seen on load stations 63 and 65.

[0034] Bi-directional motorized belt shuttle 78 is provided so that reagent containers may be moved out of analyzer 10 and transferred to another analyzer 10 when at least two automatic clinical analyzers 10 are linked together in a dual operation like disclosed in U. S. Pat. No.: 6,723,288 ~~co-pending application Ser. No. ____/____,____~~ assigned to the assignee of the present invention. The bi-directional belt shuttle 78 is adapted to move only a single reagent or vial container or sample rack or aliquot vessel array at a time between the two or more analyzers 10. The analyzers 10 are essentially machine-wise identical to one another except that the menu of assays capable of being performed on the individual analyzers 10 may be optionally and selectively different; i. e., both analyzers 10 are equipped with physically identical sample handling, reagent storage and sample processing and assaying devices, etc. However, both analyzers 10 may be equipped with a slightly different inventory of reagents stored on-board in different kinds of reagent containers 30 so that the analyzers 10 are initially capable of performing a slightly different menu of assays. In a stand-alone mode, each analyzer 10 has an independently operable bi-directional incoming and outgoing automated sample rack transport system 36, so that samples 40 to be tested may be placed

onto an analyzer 10, automatically subjected to the requested assay protocols, and returned to an inventory of samples 40 finally tested. However, when the analyzers 10 are linked together by bi-directional shuttle 78, the bi-directional incoming and outgoing sample rack transport system 36 of a first one of the two analyzers 10 is automatically converted into a one-way incoming sample rack transport system 36 adapted to receive all sample racks 42 carrying sample tubes 40 to be analyzed by either analyzer 10. In a similar manner, the incoming sample tube transport system 36 of a second of the two analyzers 10 is automatically converted into a one-way outgoing transport system 36 adapted to dispose of all sample racks 42 having sample tubes 40 with samples finally tested by either analyzer 10. Because the bi-directional shuttle 78 is adapted to move only a single sample rack 42 or reagent container 30 between analyzers 10, in the event that one of the two analyzers 10 experiences an operating failure or in the event that the bi-directional shuttle 78 experiences an operating failure, the analyzer system may automatically revert to a single analyzer system employing only the operational analyzer 10 and samples 40 may be supplied only to and analyzed only by the operational analyzer 10.

[0035] Reagent container shuttles 72, 27S and 28S are adapted to automatically compensate for unknown changes in length of a drivebelt by maintaining a constant tension on a drivebelt regardless of rapid changes in its driving direction so that reagent containers 30 may be accurately positioned at their intended location beneath reagent container shuttle 72 or within as the drivebelt wears as disclosed in published U. S. Patent Application No.: 2005/0014588 ~~co-pending application Ser. No. ____/____,____~~ assigned to the assignee of the present invention.